

# Friends, enemies and everything in between

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## PROPOSITIONS BELONGING TO THE DISSERTATION:



### **Friends, enemies and everything in between: Vaginal microbiota and sexually transmitted infections among pregnant women in sub-Saharan African**

Naomi C. A. Juliana, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021

1. A standardised means of classifying vaginal microbiota composition (VMB) is necessary in order to reach a consensus on how to define a healthy vaginal state, and investigate the VMB role in health and disease (this thesis).
2. Future research investigating the association between vaginal microbiota, vaginal dysbiotic conditions (in particular aerobic vaginitis and bacterial vaginosis), and adverse pregnancy outcomes might provide new knowledge as to why the burden of maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity remains high in sub-Saharan Africa (this thesis).
3. Aerobic vaginitis (AV) is an inflammatory condition that predisposes women to pregnancy-related complications, however its role during pregnancy remains understudied and poorly recognised in sub-Saharan Africa (this thesis).
4. Despite the treatment options available, the prevalence of curable sexually transmitted infections (STIs) remain considerable among pregnant women in Pemba Tanzania. Thus STI management strategies, particularly in antenatal care, should be reevaluated (this thesis).
5. A larger data set across multiple studies and countries will provide more scientific evidence on the relevance of VMB composition among different populations and its role on health (valorization this thesis).
6. With a retrospective approach, information about the natural history and burden of STIs in a defined populace (especially if vulnerable, e.g pregnant women) can be obtained from existing biobank samples and databases (this thesis).
7. The vaginal flora greatly influences the development of the neonatal and infant gut flora; the early postnatal colonization process is critical for susceptibility to highly prevalent non-communicable diseases later in life. *I. Gabriel et al.- J Matern Fetal Neonatal Med and Milani et al. Microbiol Mol Biol Rev.*
8. First, countries need to know their STI burden to understand where and among which population groups new infections are occurring. Only then can targeted and effective actions be taken. *J. Land and E. Ambrosino- Lancet Global health*
9. The fear of infection by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and the lock-down measures may have reduced sexual encounters and this may have led to a genuine decline in STIs. People are equally apprehensive about attending a STI clinic, thus there is likely a higher number of undetected STIs among the community with more people at risk of long-term sequelae (including risk for the subsequent pregnancy) of these STIs. *Adapted from Alessandra Latini et al.- BMJ STI*
10. In the field of observation, chance favours only the prepared mind. *Louis Pasteur.*
11. If the cardiologist thinks the heart is a wonderful organ, the cardiologist has never heard of the uterus/genital tract. *Elmar P. Sakala*
12. Ku pasenshi bo ta gana gloria – *proverb in Papiamentu*